# **Grantee Companion Guide for Critical Incident Reporting (Using GIFTS)**

#### Introduction

A critical goal of the SSVF Program is to ensure the safety of all participants, supportive service coordinators and their staff. If a Grantee becomes aware of a health or safety issue related to the participant, including unsafe accommodations, the Grantee must report the issue to the appropriate authorities. Once the appropriate authority has been alerted, the Grantee should determine whether the SSVF Program Office should be notified about the critical incident. This guide provides instruction on the method for reporting critical incidents to the SSVF Program Office within a timeframe not to exceed 48 hours after the Grantee has been made aware of the situation.

### **Grantee Policies and Procedures**

All Grantees are required to include a Critical Incident Policy in their SSVF Policies and Procedures. This policy should include the following information: 1) what constitutes a critical incident, 2) how to define an incident as critical, 3) how to respond accordingly, 4) who is responsible for responding, 5) a detailed action plan, 6) an internally established timeframe for responding to the incident and, 7) when necessary, reporting the incident to the SSVF Program Office.

### When to Submit a Critical Incident Report to the SSVF Program Office

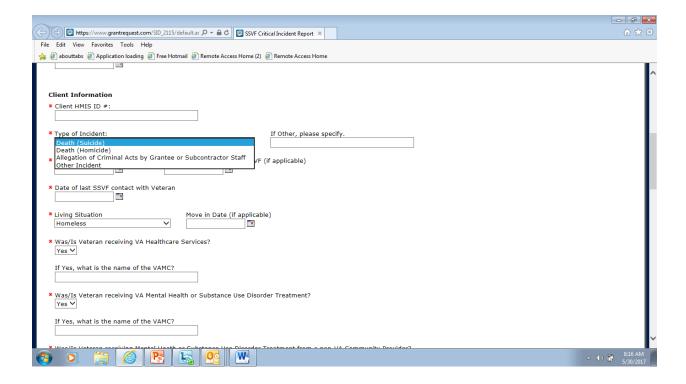
Since the Critical Incident process has been implemented within the SSVF policies and procedures, Grantees have demonstrated great improvements in addressing such incidents, especially related to health and welfare checks, aggressive acts, and assaults. The SSVF Program Office expects grantees to continue to follow their internal policies for all critical incidents, including those that are no longer required to be submitted to the SSVF Program Office. The new method for submitting Critical Incidents to the SSVF Program Office includes a revised list of incidents requiring VA notification. The SSVF Program Office is requiring Grantees to only submit the most serious of Critical Incidents, such as Suicides, Homicides, and Staff Improprieties including allegations of criminal activity by agency and subcontractor staff. All incidents that receive media attention must be reported to the SSVF Program Office. The SSVF Critical Incident process is used for the purpose of reporting serious incidents to VA leadership. If a Grantee is uncertain as to whether the Critical Incident requires SSVF Program Office notification, they should contact the SSVF Regional Coordinator.

# Submitting Critical Incident Reports to the SSVF Program Office

1. Critical Incidents are reported to the SSVF Program Office using the SSVF online grants management system (GIFTS). Grantees have an active Requirement form in their GIFTS account portal, titled SSVF Critical Incident Form. A blank form will be available within the GIFTS account portal at all times. Grantees who submit the Critical Incident Form to the SSVF Program Office can expect a new Requirement to be published in their portal for future use. If Grantees require more than one form at a given time, they may request an additional form from the SSVF Regional Coordinator.

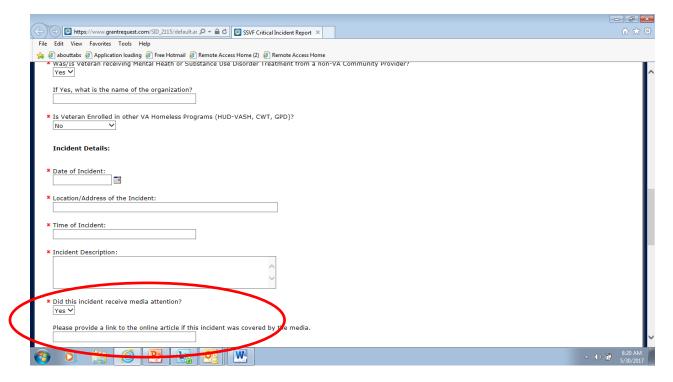


2. The agency name and grant number will be pre-populated. Please note that the form should not contain any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Veterans should be identified only by their HMIS ID. Grantee should complete the blank fields in the Agency Information and Client Information sections by typing directly into the form. Grantee should enter the Staff Name, Email Address, Phone Number, and Date of this Report. The date of the report is the date the report is completed by Agency Staff.

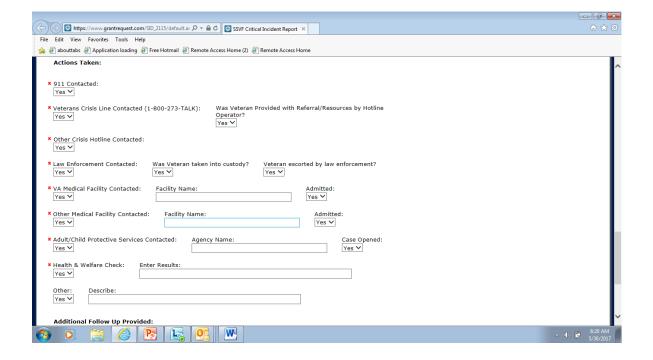


- 3. Using the drop down menus provided, Grantee should indicate the type of incident that occurred by selecting and checking **one** of the options provided. The "Other" checkbox should only be used if the incident does not fit any of the prior checkbox options. If selecting "Other", provide an explanation in the textbox, "If other, please specify". The incident description should be clear and concise and include only information relating to the critical nature of the incident. Grantees should ask themselves the following questions: "Why this incident is considered critical to the wellbeing and housing stability of those involved?" and "Why is it necessary that the SSVF Program Office be notified of this incident and have this information on file?"
- 4. When an incident involves a Veteran, information regarding the status of Veteran at the time of incident is necessary. This includes:
  - SSVF admission and exit date, if applicable
  - Date of last SSVF contact with Veteran
  - Veteran's Living Situation and move-in date, if applicable
  - Receiving VA Healthcare and name of VAMC
  - Receiving Mental Health or Substance Use Disorder and name of VAMC
  - Receiving Mental Health or Substance Use Disorder from Community Program
  - Enrollment in other VA Homeless Programs
- 5. Grantee should provide as much information about the incident. This may include how Grantee learned of incident and any follow up completed.

6. Grantee should indicate whether the incident garnered media attention. This may occur if the incident involves a criminal act committed by or against the Veteran. This information is required for reporting purposes to Veterans Affairs Central Office (VACO).



- 7. Grantee should indicate the action/s taken by using the "Yes/No" drop down menu provided for each of the options. If Grantee selects "Yes" for an action, Grantee must select "Yes" or "No" for the corresponding question (located directly to the right of the listed action). If Grantee selects actions related to "Adult/Child Protective Services Contacted" and/or "Health & Welfare Check", Grantee must provide a narrative response.
- 8. Grantee should also indicate what additional follow up was provided, if any, by selecting "Yes" or "No" from the drop down menu. If "Yes," the Grantee should enter the date that follow up was provided or describe the type of follow up "Other" was selected.



9. Grantee should follow instructions to review and submit the completed form. The SSVF Program Office will conduct a review of the submitted critical incident report and the Regional Coordinator will contact the Grantee within two business days, if any further action is necessary. Additionally, the Grantee will receive a new, blank Critical Incident Report form within the GIFTS Account portal.

